

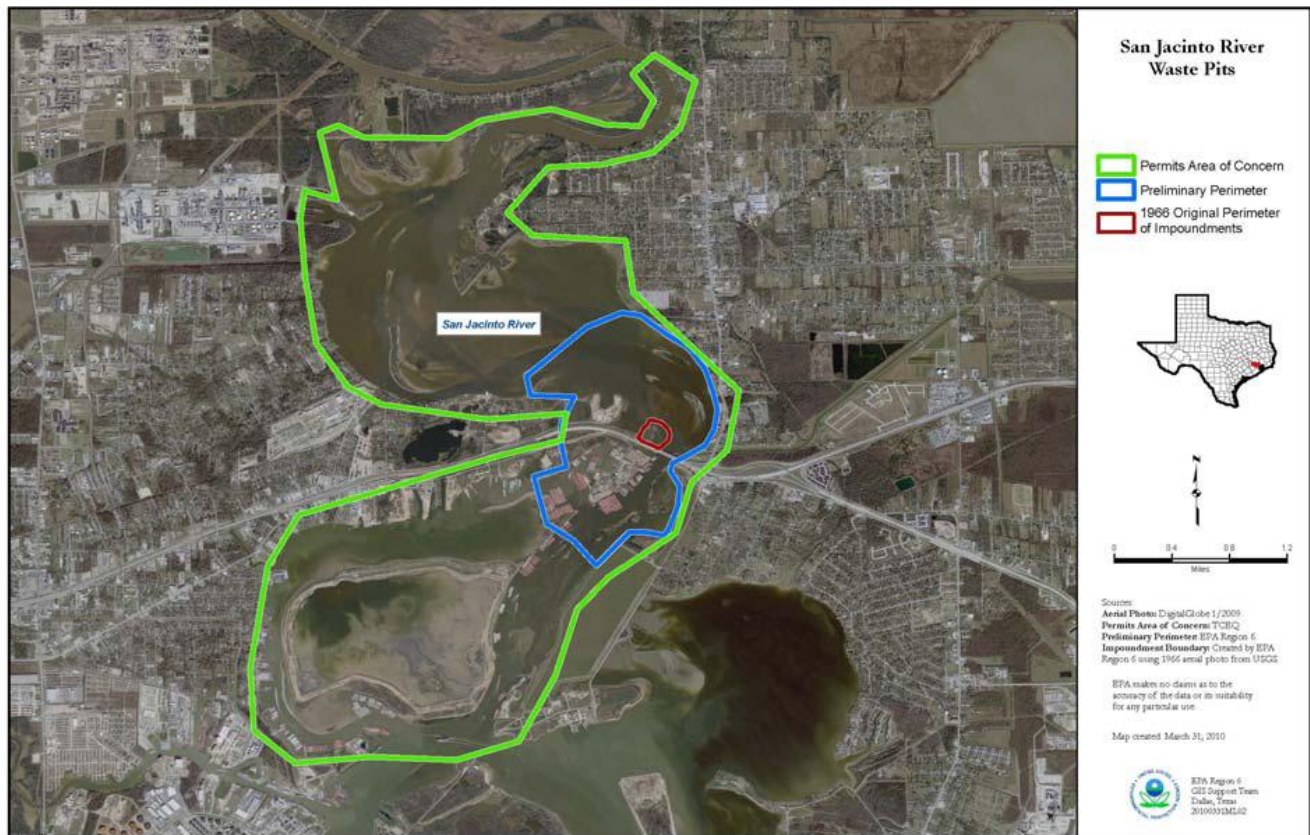
San Jacinto River Waste Pits, Texas

Site Update – October 2012

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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BACKGROUND:

The site consists of impoundments located adjacent to the Interstate Highway 10 (I-10) Bridge and the San Jacinto River and the surrounding areas, containing paper mill waste from the Pasadena Champion Paper Mill. Two impoundments are located north of the I-10 Bridge and are partially submerged in the San Jacinto River on the western side in Harris County, Texas. An additional impoundment is suspected to be located directly south of the I-10 Bridge and is currently being investigated under the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study.

The primary hazardous substances documented at the site are dioxins (polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins and polychlorinated dibenzofurans). Dioxin concentrations as high as 360,000 parts per trillion have been found in sediment samples collected from the submerged portion of the waste disposal ponds, as well as dioxin concentrations as high as 3,660 parts per trillion in sediment samples collected outside the original 1966 waste ponds. A fish consumption advisory based on dioxin is in place on this segment of the watershed.

The site was listed on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Priorities List on March 19, 2008. The EPA San Jacinto River Waste Pits (SJRWP) website can be found online at:

http://www.epa.gov/region6/6sf/texas/san_jacinto.

STATUS OF CURRENT ACTIVITIES:

I. Community Outreach

EPA, in cooperation with Harris County, State and local officials, will host a site community meeting on November 15, 2012, at 6:30 p.m at the Highlands Texas Community Center. The meeting is to update residents on recent site activities such the cap repair, southern impoundment, and Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) activities and schedules for the continued cleanup of the site.

II. Source Stabilization

On Tuesday October 30, 2012, EPA conducted a quarterly site inspection at the SJRWP site, the fourth since the removal action was completed in July 2011. The inspection reviewed the site security fencing, integrity of the armor cap, and site signage. Along with visual observations, the responsible parties have also conducted hydrographic and topographic surveys on top of the cap to ensure a minimum design thickness.

III. Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS)

The preliminary cap porewater sample results indicate that no dioxin was detected in any sample and furan was found at low levels in only 3 out of 48 samples tested. Neither dioxin nor furan was detected in the overlying surface water samples. These preliminary results indicate that the cap is currently preventing direct contact with the waste materials under the cap and release of dissolved dioxins into the surface water. The sample results from the Southern Impoundment soil, sediment, and groundwater sampling have been received and the results are being reviewed by the regulatory agencies. On the revised Baseline Ecological Risk Assessment, comments by regulatory agencies have been received and are being compiled for transmittal to the Respondents. The review of the revised Fate and Transport Model Study report has been completed and the report has been approved with modifications. Finally, a draft consent order to include the sampling plan for the River Fleet property located northwest of the waste pits is being prepared.

IV. Watershed Management

EPA continues to coordinate with the Port of Houston Authority, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). TCEQ is working on a total maximum daily load for Buffalo Bayou with regard to dioxin/furan and will put together a monitoring and implementation plan to reduce levels in Buffalo Bayou to within national background levels.

V. Enforcement

The potentially responsible party group continues to conduct the RI/FS under the Unilateral Administrative Order. In October 2012, EPA met with Respondents to discuss the issues of potential stipulated penalties and ongoing work under the Order.